

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

**The “San Jose” Field-training Model:
Effective or Outdated?**

**An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**

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ABSTRACT

Determining the validity and effectiveness of the San Jose Field Training Model was the research topic addressed in this paper. The San Jose Field Training Model was developed over thirty years ago to address the almost nonexistent training most police recruits received by agencies that hired them. Given the vast changes in the field of law enforcement since that time, surveys of modern law enforcement agencies were conducted to determine how many agencies continue to utilize field training programs based on the San Jose Model and whether or not those agencies that use the model feel it is still effective. The research showed that between 75% and 84% of law enforcement agencies that have an established field training program continue to use a program based on the San Jose Model. Furthermore, approximately 81% of those agencies that use a field training program based on the San Jose Model feel that their program is still effective at meeting the needs of their new recruits. The conclusion reached at the end of this research project was the San Jose Model was apparently well developed in its infancy and has stood the test of time.

INTRODUCTION

Currently, law enforcement agencies are faced with a plethora of issues that have changed over the past thirty years. One issue in particular agencies must address is the adequate training of officers within their agencies. The training an officer receives has a direct impact on the agency they work for, along with the citizens they serve. In modern society, where civil law suits abound, having professional well-trained officers is critical.

Most law enforcement agencies in the United States have some form of field-training program in place to train new recruits hired by their agencies. It is estimated that about seventy-five (75) percent of these law enforcement agencies utilize a field-training program, based upon the now famous "San Jose" field-training model. The San Jose field-training program, hereinafter referred to as the San Jose Model, was developed in the early 1970's. The development of the program was directly related to an unfortunate incident where people were killed in a car accident by a new, poorly trained officer.

The research question to be addressed in this administrative research paper is whether or not the San Jose Model, which was developed in the early 1970's, is still an effective and valid program model for modern law enforcement agencies to follow. As times change, so must law enforcement's ability to adapt to those changes. It is important that the training programs that an agency uses are able to be adapted to meet the changing needs of the agency and the new employees being trained in those programs.

The methods of inquiry to be employed during the research of this topic are: surveys of various law enforcement agencies, reference books on field-training

programs, previous Leadership Command College (LCC) administrative research papers, online field-training manuals from various law enforcement agencies and the field-training manual from the Comal County Sheriff's Office. Determining how many agencies currently implement a field-training program based on the San Jose Model and how effective they feel their field-training programs are, will help establish whether the San Jose Model, in general, is still effective. While it is too early to say at this point what the research will show, there is good reason to believe many law enforcement agencies continue to use the San Jose modeled program because it adequately addresses the majority of their needs and the needs of new recruits.

If the San Jose Model is still effective, then there is not a need for agencies to change their field-training programs simply for the sake of change. If there are areas of an agency's field-training program that need to be updated, then it is imperative that the law enforcement agency address those areas to ensure that a recruit receives the best possible training. This research may assist law enforcement agencies in determining if their current field-training program is adequate or what type of program to implement if the agencies have not yet established a field-training program.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Field-training programs are still a relatively new concept in law enforcement. Prior to the early 1970's, field-training basically consisted of an officer receiving some basic equipment and maybe a few days of familiarization with a veteran officer. There was no documentation of the recruit's performance to assist the agency in evaluating the new officer's performance in the field. (Bevering, 1999) There was not adequate training to assist the new officer in performing his/her duties better either.

As with most major advances in law enforcement, it took a traumatic event to bring about a change in thinking and a change in training. In San Jose, California in 1970, the negligent actions of a police recruit caused a serious traffic accident which resulted in the death of a citizen and serious injury to the police recruit. After a review of the recruit's personnel files, it was clear to the Administration of the San Jose Police Department that the department's evaluation process was inadequate. (McCampbell, 1987)

The San Jose Police Department developed a field-training program based on recommendations from a team of psychologists that not only defined police officer function areas, but also achieved the first statistical validation of a police department evaluation device. The San Jose Model was developed with foresight, so future changes to the program could be made if necessary. (Hurley, 1990) The San Jose Model was created to provide the City of San Jose, California with an adequate training program for newly hired police recruits. What they did not know at the time was they had created a field-training program that would be copied and emulated throughout the world for decades to come.

Glenn Kaminsky, often considered the "Father" of FTO, stated that the San Jose Model was based upon several key elements to ensure the validity of the program. The first essential element of the program was the commitment to the program by the agency administrators. The agency administrators understood the importance of how the program was developed and why the program was so important to the agency's existence. (Kaminsky, 2002)

The next essential element was the management of the program. There had to be one individual with the responsibility of overseeing the program to ensure that all of the program's guidelines were followed. The person managing the program had to have a great deal of knowledge about the program and enough influence within the agency to ensure the program's survival. (Kaminsky, 2002)

The program's duration was originally set at fourteen weeks. The established length of the program was an essential element. The length of the program remained constant unless remedial training of a recruit dictated a week or two of extra training. (Kaminsky, 2002)

Another essential element of the program was the Daily Observation Report. A recruit was evaluated on thirty-one specific areas that effectively documented the recruit's job performance for that day. The Daily Observation Report provided the recruit with a written evaluation of his/her job performance and provided the agency with written documentation of the recruit's performance for future reference. (Kaminsky, 2002)

The "Limbo" period, or observation days, was also placed in the program to provide recruits with periods when their primary responsibility was to observe and listen to his Field Training Officer (FTO). That limbo period provided a time for the recruit and FTO to get to know each other as well as let the recruit settle in to his/her new environment before being expected to perform at his/her best. (Kaminsky, 2002)

The last essential element of the program is the rotation of the recruit between several different FTOs. The rotation of the recruit between different FTOs provided the recruit with different trainers, and consequently, different perspectives. Different

trainers teach concepts different ways and recruits learn tasks and techniques different ways, so rotating recruits between different FTOs provides the recruits with the best opportunity to adequately learn what is needed to successfully complete the program. (Kaminsky, 2002)

The proper training of police recruits has become an important issue since the inception of the San Jose Model. In 1983, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA) required all law enforcement agencies seeking accreditation to conduct formal field training for recruits. (McC Campbell, 1987) The Police Executive Research Forum, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriff's Association and the National Association of Black Law Enforcement Executives approved the requirement for formalized field training for accreditation by CALEA. (Hurley, 1990)

Since the San Jose Model was developed, it is estimated that as many as 75% of modern law enforcement agencies with a formal field-training program, have a program based upon the San Jose Model. (Kaminsky, 2002) There is little doubt the attributes of the San Jose Model have led to its adoption by many law enforcement agencies. There are those, however, that say that there are certain attributes of the San Jose Model that are not as beneficial as some other training programs or methods.

The Daily Observation Report (DOR), which is a vital element of the San Jose Model, has been questioned by other agencies and organizations. Some believe that requiring FTOs to record a recruit's performance daily on a DOR is neither beneficial to the recruit or the FTO. The San Francisco Police Department wanted to have their FTOs place more emphasis on training and less on daily documentation. Under San

Francisco's program, the FTO took daily notes and submitted a formal weekly evaluation at the end of the training week. Of Note, shortly after San Francisco PD changed their FTO's evaluation intervals, the California Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) developed their own model, which emphasized weekly instead of daily evaluations. (Hurley, 1990)

More emphasis is currently being placed on the recruit's actual training and his/her ability to learn instead of the recruit's documented daily evaluations. During recent years, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on "competency-based learning" or "adult-based learning". The concept behind competency-based learning or adult-based learning is to provide the adult learner, in advance, the competencies that he/she will be expected to demonstrate and master during the training program. The criteria that will be used to assess the progress of the adult-learner are also given to the individual in advance. The program requires actual performance of the competency as the primary source of mastery and the individual progresses through the program at his/her own rate by demonstrating the attainment of specific competencies. (Sullivan, 1995) The emphasis of the competency-based or adult-based learning is the learner's requirement to successfully perform the acquired skills, or competencies, and show a particular level of mastery before being allowed to complete the training program.

The concept of competency-based learning and how it applies to all different aspects of learning is being seen in various types of learning environments. Competency-based learning has been in place for years in the medical field. Doctors, nurses, paramedics and so forth have been trained using that philosophy. (Sullivan, 1995) Educators in recent years have been evaluating the competency-based learning

model to see if the concept would work in secondary and post-secondary education. The similarities in training people to perform certain functions well are similar in a broad variety of learning environments, including police recruit training programs.

METHODOLOGY

The question that was originally posed was whether or not the San Jose Model is still an effective training model after thirty plus years of usage? The effectiveness of any program or tool is a question of objectivity of course. What some person or agency might find effective, might be considered ineffective by someone else's standard. The question of effectiveness in the context of this research paper is simply to determine whether or not the San Jose Model is being utilized by a substantial number of agencies, who find it to be an effective training method for their agency.

Based on preliminary discussions and inquiries with officers from different agencies, a considerable number of law enforcement organizations seem to use a training program based on the San Jose Model. Based on the sheer number of agencies who use the San Jose Model as a basis for their own training program, one would believe that the San Jose Model is an effective training tool and has stood the test of time. Many law enforcement organizations are reluctant to change policies and philosophies regarding methods that have worked for them in the past and still work for them to this day.

To determine what percentage of law enforcement agencies use a training program based on the San Jose Model, a written survey was disseminated via e-mail to participants of the Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas Leadership

Command College who attended Module I of the program during September 2004. A written copy of the survey was also distributed to attendees of an FTO Management course held in the San Antonio area in April 2005. Fifty surveys were distributed in all. The participants in the survey represented members of State, County and City law enforcement agencies of varying size and demographics throughout the State of Texas. Representatives from agencies with several thousands of officers to agencies with less than ten officers participated in the survey. All areas and regions of Texas were represented in the survey, and 64% of the fifty agencies that were surveyed responded.

As well as the written survey of Texas law enforcement agencies, an on-line inquiry was conducted of law enforcement agencies from throughout the United States. The agencies were located on the National Association of Field Training Officers (NAFTO) website. This website is a national organization of FTO's from around the United States and several of the member agencies had information regarding their agency's FTO program as a link on the website. Twenty different agencies consisting of various size and demographics had sufficient information regarding their agency's FTO program to determine whether or not the program was based on the San Jose Model.

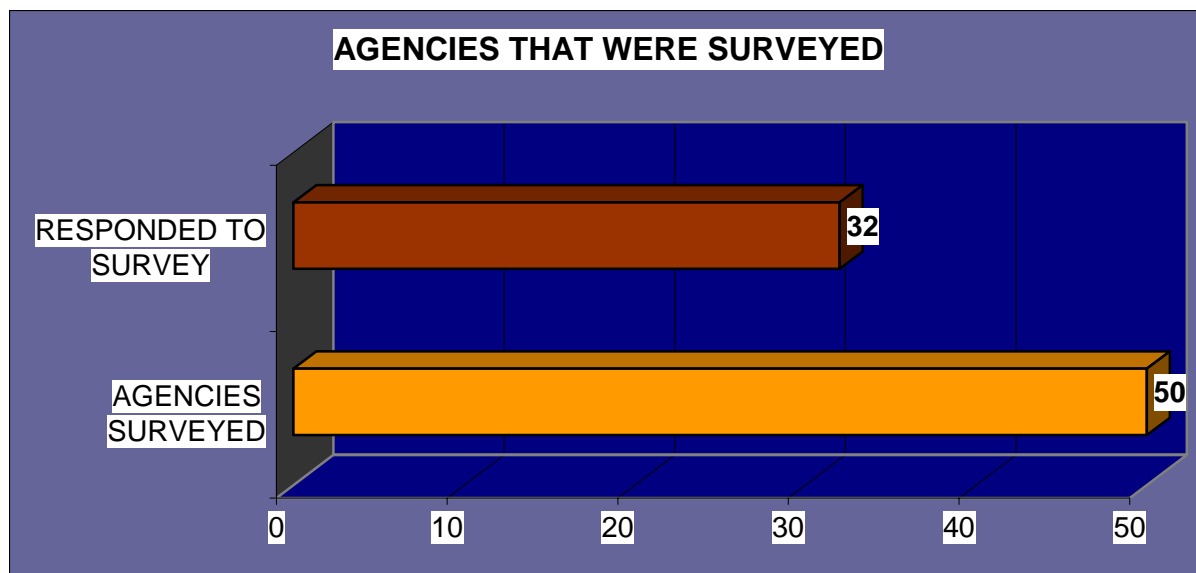
The results of the written survey of Texas law enforcement agencies, as well as the on-line inquiry of law enforcement agencies from throughout the United States, was examined to determine what percentage of those agencies use the San Jose Model as a basis for their own field-training program. Those agencies that responded to the written survey and do use the San Jose Model as a basis for their program, were asked if they felt their FTO program was effective in the sense that the program met the needs

of newly hired officers or recruits. The results of that part of the survey were compared to how many agencies still use the San Jose Model as a basis for their FTO program.

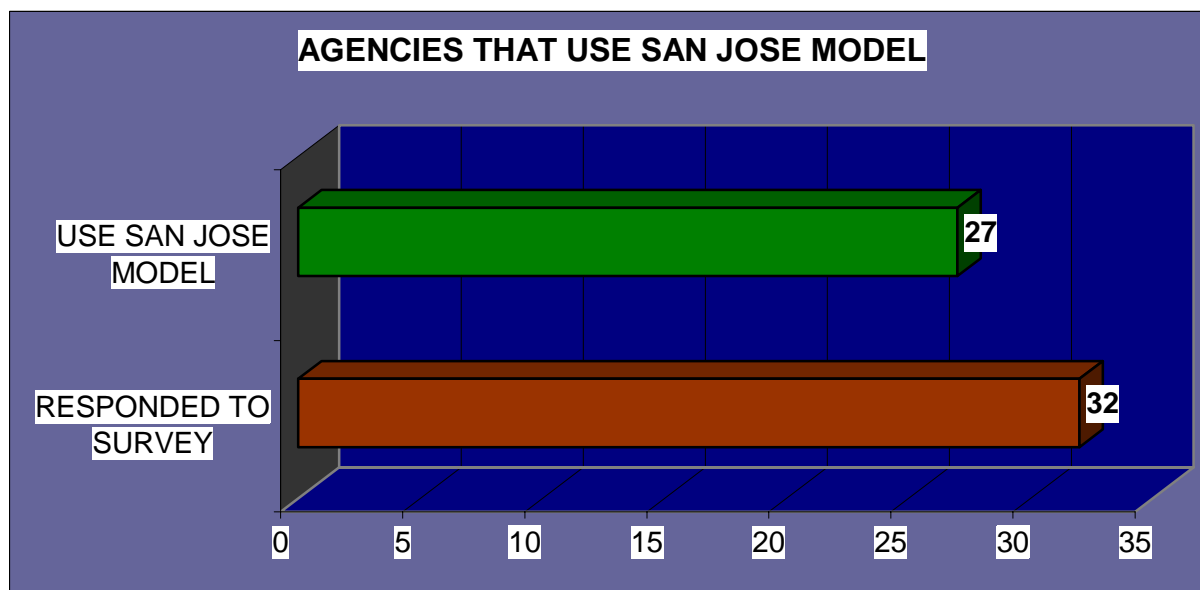
FINDINGS

While certain figures differ slightly, most reference materials regarding the San Jose Model are consistent on the point that a majority of law enforcement agencies are using a field-training program based on the San Jose Model. Kaminsky, a fledgling member of the San Jose field-training program, estimated in 2002, as many as 75% of law enforcement agencies use a program based on the San Jose Model. (Kaminsky, 2002) That percentage was on par with some recent independent research that confirmed that a majority of law enforcement agencies do in fact, use a program based on the San Jose Model.

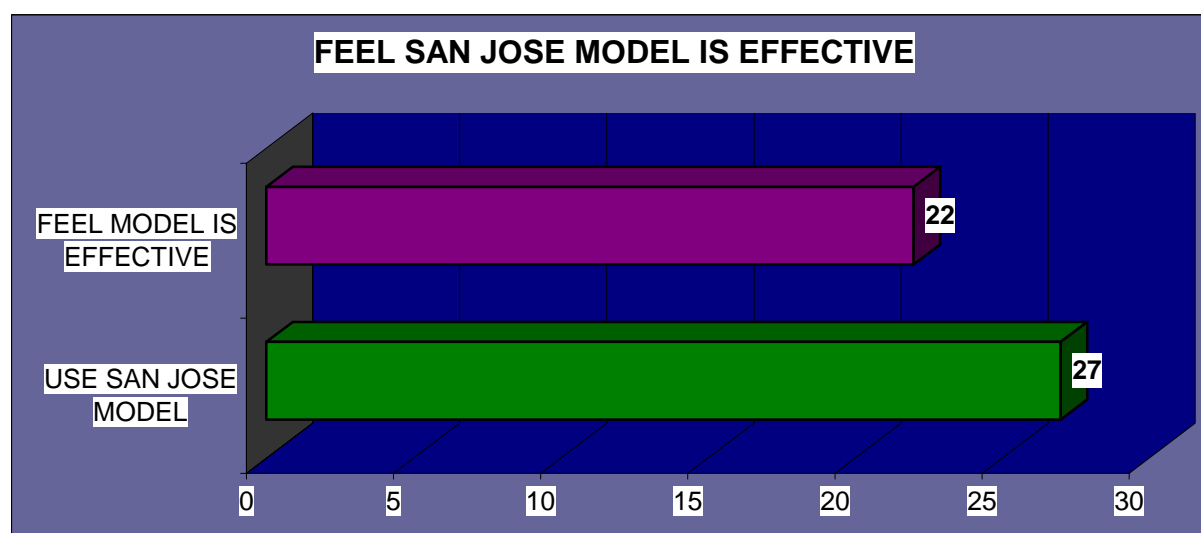
A survey was distributed to a sampling of fifty various law enforcement agencies in the State of Texas. Of the fifty surveys that were distributed, 64% of the agencies surveyed responded to the survey. That sampling of agencies represented a fairly wide variety of law enforcement agencies from a vast array of sizes and demographics.



Of the agencies that responded to the survey, 84% stated that they did use a field-training program based upon the San Jose Model. That figure is slightly higher than the figure quoted by Kaminsky in 2002. The slight difference in the figures is not as important as the fact that according to the independent survey, a large percentage of law enforcement agencies continue to use a field-training program based on the San Jose Model.

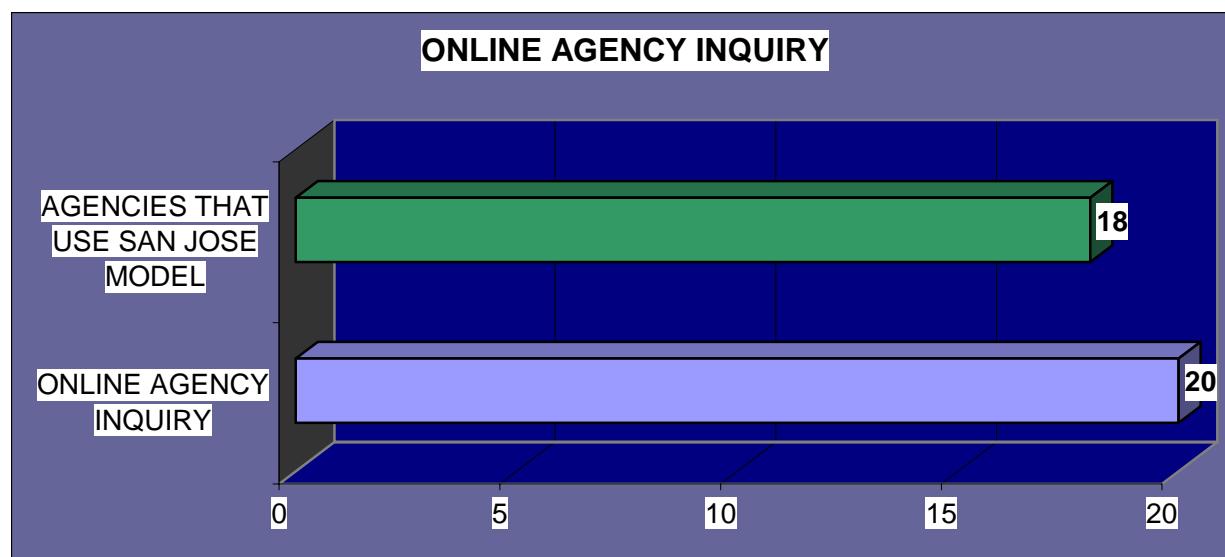


While a large percentage of law enforcement agencies surveyed continue to use a field-training program based on the San Jose Model, which does not necessarily reflect how many of those agencies feel that their field-training program is as effective as it should be in training new officers or recruits. In the independent survey, those responding agencies were asked specifically if they felt that their agency's field-training program adequately met the needs of newly hired officers or recruits. Not too surprisingly, 81% of the agencies that use the San Jose Model as a basis for their field-training program stated that their program did effectively meet the needs of newly hired officers or recruits.



An on-line inquiry of law enforcement agencies nationwide, shadow the independent survey and expert opinion regarding the number of agencies that use the San Jose Model as a basis for their field-training program. The information regarding the programs was drawn from information placed on independent websites for each individual law enforcement agency, which all had links to the NAFTO. According to the information from the websites regarding how their field-training programs were set-up,

the research showed that as many as 90% of the agencies linked to the NAFTO website utilize a field-training program based on the San Jose Model.



The information drawn from the NAFTO website and the independent law enforcement agencies that are linked to that website is to a certain degree, limited. There is not an efficient way to determine if those law enforcement agencies feel their programs are as effective as they would like them to be. However, since the agencies are linked to the website for the National Association of Field Training Officers, it would be fairly safe to assume that those agencies feel that their programs have something significant to offer other law enforcement agencies or personnel interested in the concept of field training officers and field-training in general. One could assume if an agency did not feel that their particular program was a significant contribution, an agency would not post their program information on the World Wide Web.

The sheer number of law enforcement agencies that utilize the San Jose Model as a basis for their own field-training program bodes well for the perceived effectiveness of the San Jose Model. That is not to say that other agencies that use a different type

of field-training program are ineffective. There is evidence that different programs are in use across the country and are just effective. Of the agencies independently surveyed, 16% of them use a program that is not based on the San Jose Model.

There were 19% of the agencies surveyed that did use a program based on the San Jose Model that did not feel it was effective in training new officer or recruits. There are a number of factors that could play an important role in that perceived ineffectiveness. It goes without saying that every law enforcement agency is different and what might work for one, may not work for another.

CONCLUSION

Many things have changed in the law enforcement profession since the early 1970s. Is a field-training program that was developed in San Jose, California during that time still a valid program model for modern law enforcement agencies to use? The belief going into the independent research of this question was that the San Jose Model was still somewhat effective or a large number of modern law enforcement agencies would not still be using it as a basis for their programs.

The independent research into the effectiveness of the San Jose Model supported the belief that the program is still an effective training tool for modern law enforcement agencies. A large percentage of the agencies surveyed continue to use a field-training program based upon the San Jose Model. A large percentage of those agencies that do use a San Jose Model based program feel their program is effective in training newly hired officers or recruits.

The independent research was from a fairly small sampling in terms of sheer numbers. The on-line inquiry of law enforcement agencies from throughout the United

States was also a fairly small sampling of agencies in terms of the number of agencies that were queried. However, the percentages of those agencies surveyed and the on-line agencies that were queried closely resemble from other researchers and experts such as Kaminsky and McCampbell, both considered experts in the field of field training programs.

The research and forethought put into the development of the San Jose Model was remarkable. The development of a training program for newly hired police officers in the early 1970's that is still in use, not only in the United States but world wide, should be taken into account by any law enforcement agency considering a new field-training program or making modifications to an existing program. The San Jose Model was developed so that it would stand the test of time and could be easily modified when necessary, and has proven just that through the years. (Hurley, 1990)

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Field Training Program Survey

This survey, in conjunction with various other forms of research material, will be utilized to determine the widespread use and effectiveness of the "San Jose" Field Training model in modern law enforcement agencies. Whether or not your agency utilizes a field training program based on the "San Jose" Field Training model, please complete the survey as comprehensively as possible and return upon completion. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated and your answers will be used for research purposes only.

Name: _____ Agency: _____

1. Does your agency currently have a Field Training Program (hereinafter referred to as "FTO Program") in place to train newly hired officers / recruits?

☐ YES ☐ NO

2. Is your agency's "FTO Program" based on the "San Jose" Field Training model? (If unknown, please complete the "San Jose" FTM worksheet attached to this survey)

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNKNOWN

3. If your agency's "FTO Program" is based on the "San Jose" Field Training model, has it been modified or adapted in the past five (5) to ten (10) years to meet the changing needs of newly hired officers / recruits?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNKNOWN

4. Is your agency's "FTO Program" based on an "Adult Based Learning" model or "Community Oriented Policing" model that differs significantly from the "San Jose" Field Training model?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ UNKNOWN

5. Do you feel that your agency's "FTO Program" adequately meets the training needs of your agency's newly hired officers / recruits?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Thank you for your time and participation in this survey!

Please forward your completed surveys to the e-mail address or mailing address listed below:

Sgt. Bryan Huggins
Comal County Sheriff's Office
3005 W. San Antonio St.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
e-mail to: soabkh@co.comal.tx.us subject=FTO Program Survey

“San Jose” Field Training Model Worksheet

This worksheet can be used to determine if your agency utilizes a Field Training Program based upon the “San Jose” Field Training model. If you answer “YES” to the majority of the following questions, then it can be assumed that your agency’s field training program is based all, or in part, on the “San Jose” Field Training model. It is not necessary to return this worksheet with your completed survey.

1. Does your agency’s “FTO Program” consist of a predetermined number of weeks or months of field training that the recruit must successfully complete in order to remain an officer with your agency?

☐ YES☐ NO☐ UNKNOWN

2. Do newly hired officers train with a different Field Training Officer (FTO) during each separate phase of your agency’s Field Training Program (hereinafter “FTO Program”)?

☐ YES☐ NO☐ UNKNOWN

3. Does your agency utilize a Daily Observation Report with a scaled grading system, i.e. one (1) to seven (7), to evaluate a recruit’s performance in a number of predetermined performance categories?

☐ YES☐ NO☐ UNKNOWN

4. Do your agency’s Daily Observation Reports allow for the FTO to record the recruits Most Acceptable Performance, Least Acceptable Performance, and any additional comments they may have in narrative form?

☐ YES☐ NO☐ UNKNOWN

5. Does you agency have a FTO Supervisor who oversees the “FTO Program” and evaluates the recruit’s progress on a weekly or bi-weekly basis?

☐ YES☐ NO☐ UNKNOWN